

# Delaware Announces Funding to Improve Access to Delaware Grown Food

## \$2M in seed funding to stabilize and strengthen family farms and local food supply chain operations

**WILMINGTON, Del.** – Governor John Carney, the Delaware Department of Agriculture, and the Delaware Council on Farm and Food Policy on Thursday announced a \$2 million investment in seed funding to establish the First State Integrated Food System Program. This new program, which will be developed by the Delaware Council on Farm and Food Policy, will help stabilize and strengthen Delaware's small and mid-sized farmers and local food supply chain operations, among the hardest hit sectors during the pandemic.

The funding for this program is provided through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), which was signed into law by President Joe Biden and championed by members of Delaware's congressional delegation – U.S. Senators Tom Carper and Chris Coons, and Congresswoman Lisa Blunt Rochester.

*"The First State Integrated Food System will provide a coordinated approach to improving local access to affordable and nutritious, Delaware-produced foods while supporting Delaware farmers," said **Governor Carney**. "We know the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted small-scale food businesses and Delaware families' access to food. That's why the Council on Farm and Food Policy will work with partners to develop and administer a diverse portfolio of grants and loans to improve the availability and accessibility of local produce,*

*animal protein, value-added products, and other foods, promoting overall economic growth here in Delaware.”*

“The rise of food insecurity in Delaware is just one example of how the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated existing issues in our communities,” said **Delaware’s Congressional Delegation of U.S. Senators Tom Carper, Chris Coons and Congresswoman Lisa Blunt Rochester**. “This new program will be made possible through federal funds from the American Rescue Plan Act, which we voted to pass in March of this year, and will bring resources and support to Delaware’s farmers, suppliers, and distributors. We commend Governor Carney’s decision to prioritize the availability and accessibility of Delaware grown food through the creation of this innovative program. We look forward to working with our colleagues on both sides of the aisle to continue to fight for assistance for Delaware’s farms and supply chain operations.”

The First State Integrated Food System Program focuses on three main channels in the food supply chain, including:

- Production: small and mid-size farmers;
- Processing and distribution: commercial kitchens, processing facilities, storage/hub facilities, incubators;
- Retail/consumer outlets: convenience stores, groceries/markets, restaurants, farmers’ markets, food trucks, food kiosks, and mobile markets.

“This program prioritizes our food system and provides an opportunity for the State to make a strategic investment in how families access food in their communities and at the same time improve the resilience of the local food supply chain,” said **Secretary of Agriculture Michael T. Scuse**. “Neighboring states, like Maryland and New Jersey, have reaped the benefits of food financing programs. The First State Integrated Food System Program will make similar opportunities available to

bolster Delaware's capacity. These efforts will go a long way in improving local access to local food."

The Council provides a lens into various aspects of Delaware's food system, supply chain, and food security. The Council strives to facilitate and support a food system where:

- Local farmers can access viable markets;
- All Delawareans can access resources needed to circumvent challenges associated with securing nutritious and local food options; and
- Where vulnerabilities within our communities can be diminished.

"The Council's past efforts have laid the groundwork to provide coordination and strategy around long-term resiliency planning," said **Nikko Brady, Delaware Council on Farm and Food Policy Executive Committee member**. "The development of the First State Integrated Food System Program is one more way for us to help connect Delaware farmers to processors and retail outlets to get food on to the tables of Delawareans."

Each member of the Council draws on daily experiences as part of their respective organizations and contributes knowledge and expertise to conversations about food access, food policy, and nutrition in Delaware. The Council's primary function is to offer knowledge, information, and strategy around food that helps coordinate and improve the capacities of state agencies, public officials, community members, and organizations.

All ARPA funds related to this program will be dispersed by December 2024. For more information regarding the [Delaware Council on Farm and Food Policy](#) or the First State Integrated Food Safety Program, contact Nikko Brady at the Delaware Department of Agriculture, [nikko.brady@delaware.gov](mailto:nikko.brady@delaware.gov).

Visit [de.gov/rescueplan](https://de.gov/rescueplan) to learn more about how the American Rescue Plan (ARPA) is helping in Delaware.

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